MSNBC's Hayes Compares Using Oil to Drug Addiction, Opposes Keystone Pipeline

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On Friday's All In show, MSNBC host Chris Hayes gave a commentary opposing the Keystone pipeline as he compared America's use of oil to "drug addiction," and pushed the far left idea of leaving 80 percent of the world's oil reserves untapped to supposedly prevent the world's temperature from increasing

The MSNBC host suggested that conservatives are like addicts who are in denial, with liberals as addicts who want to change but can't.

After using clips of Rudy Giuliani, Michael Steele, and Sarah Palin saying, "drill, baby, drill," followed by a clip of President Obama from the State of the Union address, Hayes fretted over the "catastrophe" that would happen if the Keystone pipeline moves forward:

Our nation, our society, is addicted to fossil fuel. Quite literally we are dependent on it. We have a chemical dependency and we need to break it or we will raise the temperature of the earth so much it will invite massive risk of widespread catastrophe, disaster and misery.

In fact, if we avoid heating the planet past the two-degree threshold the world has agreed is the outer limit to avoid the worst hazards of climate change, it is estimated we have to leave 80 percent of the current known fossil fuel reserves in the world in the ground. That's right. Trillions of dollars of crude oil, of tar sands oil, of coal and natural gas, we have to leave it in the ground, abandon it there.

Below is a complete transcript of the commentary from the Friday, January 31, All In with Chris Hayes on MSNBC:

CHRIS HAYES: If you're watching this right now, odds are close to 100 percent that you or someone you love deeply has wrestled with addiction. It's a brutal wrenching thing to watch. I've seen it up close. You want to grab the person and shake them until they stop, but, of course, that doesn't work because, when you confront an addict about their addiction, they generally respond in one of two ways.

Some are at a point where they can't even bring themselves to acknowledge that they're destroying themselves. "It's fun when I drink. It's not a big deal. I'm not hurting anyone." Or:

FORMER MAYOR RUDY GIULIANI (R-NEW YORK CITY): Drill, baby, drill? Drill, baby, drill.

MICHAEL STEELE, FORMER RNC CHAIRMAN: Drill, baby, drill, and drill now.

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ALISYN CAMEROTA, FNC HOST: You famously coined the term "drill, baby, drill." Given this catastrophe, are you rethinking your position?

FORMER GOVERNOR SARAH PALIN, (R-AK): No. We still need to drill, baby, drill.

HAYES: Other addicts are ready to acknowledge they're addicted, that they're trapped in a self-destructive cycle. They know it and it kills them they are. They need to stop. But when you push them to actually stop, what they do is procrastinate and rationalize. "It's my best friend's wedding this weekend, but, as soon as I get back from that, I promise you I will quit on Monday." Or:

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA CLIP #1: The all-the-above energy strategy I announced a few years ago is working, and today America is closer to energy independence than we have been in decades.

OBAMA CLIP #2: One of the reasons why is natural gas. If extracted safely, it's the bridge fuel that can power our economy with less of the carbon pollution that causes climate change.

HAYES: What's maddening about this argument is that in some sense the addict is correct. I mean, it actually doesn't matter if they quit tomorrow or the day after, if they quit a month from now or five weeks from now. But the problem, of course, is that logic is infinitely extendable. To the addict, tomorrow never comes. The time to quit is never now.

Our nation, our society, is addicted to fossil fuel. Quite literally we are dependent on it. We have a chemical dependency and we need to break it or we will raise the temperature of the earth so much it will invite massive risk of widespread catastrophe, disaster and misery.

In fact, if we avoid heating the planet past the two-degree threshold the world has agreed is the outer limit to avoid the worst hazards of climate change, it is estimated we have to leave 80 percent of the current known fossil fuel reserves in the world in the ground. That's right. Trillions of dollars of crude oil, of tar sands oil, of coal and natural gas, we have to leave it in the ground, abandon it there. In other words, we have to stop.

And that is why a growing movement has come together to oppose the Keystone XL pipeline, a project that would pump dirty tar sands oil reserves in Canada across much of the central states down to Texas to be refined. Tar sands oil is the dregs, far more polluting than light, sweet crude. And that's why the pipeline is the line in the sand.

It's the day circled on the calendar. It is quitting time if we are serious. If we're actually going to leave 80 percent of the known reserves in the ground, if we're actually going to save the world from heating past two degrees, then we have to say no.

Today, the State Department, which has authority over the pipeline's permitting because it crosses a national border, released its final supplemental environmental impact statement. While it acknowledges that oil sands crude produces 17 percent more carbon pollution than average crude, it also says that approval or denial of any one crude oil transport project, including the proposed project, is unlikely to significantly impact the rate of extraction in the oil sands or the continued demand for heavy crude oil at refineries in the United States. This is the logic of the addict.

Sure, no single project is going to be the project that does us in, just like no single drink is what does the drunk in. Sure, it doesn't matter if we quit today or tomorrow, but if we say we're going to quit today and then push it off until tomorrow, we are not quitting. So let us not fool ourselves. If we spend billions of dollars to tap an entire new keg, a dirty keg at that, we are not quitting. We are sinking further into our dependence and self-destruction and dissolution.

Now, this fight is far from over. John Kerry ultimately still has to sign off on the recommendation to allow the pipeline to be built, and the President will have the ultimate say, and he has set the standard very recently in his own State of the Union.

OBAMA: The shift to a cleaner energy economy won't happen overnight, and it will require some tough choices along the way. But the debate is settled. Climate change is a fact, and when our children's children look us in the eye and ask if we did all we could to leave them a safer, more stable world with new sources of energy, I want us to be able to say, "Yes, we did."

HAYES: "Did all we could." Those are the President's words. The miracle of those who break addiction is the incredible resolve they somehow manage to find within themselves to counter the inner addict's logic. The part of them that tries to seduce them into one more drink by just telling them it's just one more. And everyone who breaks free of any addiction digs down and finds some inner strength to say, no, to stop. To say this is the day I start to turn my life around. And the question is whether we as citizens and Barack Obama as a president, as a human being, can find that strength within himself.

--Brad Wilmouth is a news analyst at the Media Research Center. Click here to follow Brad Wilmouth on Twitter.

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